

Washington - In testimony today before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law (CAL), former Deputy Attorney General James B. Comey praised the work of several of the U.S. Attorneys fired last year by the Bush Administration and discussed the process that led to their terminations.

CAL Subcommittee Chairwoman Linda Sánchez called the hearing to continue the House Judiciary Committee's investigation into the Bush Administration's mass firing of U.S. Attorneys.

During Comey's service as the second-in-charge at the Justice Department, he was the direct supervisor of all 93 U.S. Attorney offices across the country. Comey told the subcommittee that he was very familiar with several of the prosecutors who were eventually fired and praised the work of U.S. Attorneys Daniel Bogden, Paul Charlton, David Iglesias, Carol Lam, and John McKay.

"James Comey is a respected prosecutor who served the American people well as a U.S. Attorney as well as Deputy Attorney General," said House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, Jr. "Today, we further confirmed that the Department's stated reasons for firing the six U.S. Attorneys who testified before this Committee had little or no basis in fact."

Despite his position overseeing the U.S. Attorneys, Comey testified that he had not been informed that a process had begun to replace multiple federal prosecutors. He recalled a fifteen-minute meeting in February 2005 with Kyle Sampson, former Chief of Staff to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales — one of only two discussions where he was asked to give an offhand assessment of poor-performing U.S. Attorneys.

"Mr. Comey's testimony today was important and, frankly, refreshing," said Chairwoman Sánchez. "He clearly understands the importance of protecting the justice system from partisan pressures, which may explain his apparently unique ability among senior Justice Department officials to remember discussions about mass firing U.S. Attorneys."

"We also learned that the list of U.S. Attorneys to be fired seems to have been created through immaculate conception," added Chairman Conyers. "Mr. Comey, like everyone else in the Department so far, does not know who put these prosecutors on the firing list or why. This makes testimony from Monica Goodling and White House officials all the more crucial."